THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) A news item captioned "Bombs worth Rs. 32 crores in Army trash bin" has come to the notice of the Government. The news item is based on observations contained in para 39 of the C & AG Report No. 8 of 1996 for the period ended 31 March, 1995.

(b) Rs. 32 crores is the value of 39,485 rounds of two versions of a tank ammunition manufactured using primer 'Y' based on technology transfer from abroad. The initial lots of primer 'Y' were manufactured in the presence and direct supervision of the foreign technical experts and to their satisfaction. Primer lots 1 to 25 were used in these 39,485 rounds of the ammunition which were issued to the army, after successful proof testing of both the primer and the ammunition rounds.

2. Primer 'Y' from one of the lots which had also been successfully proof tested was used as a sub-system in the testing of a third version of the ammunition, which was under development indigenously, when an accident occurred. Investigations revealed that the accident was most probably due to an operation called "beading" not having been carried out in the manufacture of primer 'Y'. Arising out of this, "beading" is being carried out in the manufacture of primer 'Y' from lot 26 onwards.

3. Out of 39,485 rounds of the first two versions of ammunition issued to the army, some rounds have already been usedup. No problem has been reported. However, following the accident while testing the third version of the ammunition under indigenous development, 28,377 rounds of first two versions of the ammunition lying in the army's ammunition depots which have the unbeaded primer 'Y' have been segregated. This has been done as a measure of abundant caution. Also, rectification work involving replacement of the primer from these rounds has commenced.

[Translation]

Maintenance and Construction of N.H. in Maharashtra

3382. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Maharashtra Government has sought increase in the demands for grants and agency charges for the maintenance and construction of National Highways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (c). The allocation of funds for development of National Highways have been of the order of about 40% of the requirements. As such it has not been possible to fully meet the demands of the States including State of Maharashtra.

[English]

Eradication of Blindness, Leprosy and T.B.

3383. SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA :
SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the World Bank has sanctioned loan for three big schemes for eradication of leprosy, control of blindness and eradication of tuberculosis in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by the Union Government for early utilisation of the said loan; and

(d) the time by which the said schemes are likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) to (d).The World Bank has sanctioned loans for National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) and National Blindness Control Programme (NBCP) as per details given as under :

1. NLEP - Rs. 302 crores for the period 1993-94 to March 1997.
2. NBCP - Rs. 554.36 crores for the period of 1994 to 2000.

The Government is seeking World Bank loan for an amount of Rs. 749.28 crores for the implementation of the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme which all be for 5 years beginning from January, 1997.

The implementation of the Programmes under the World Bank funding are progressing accordingly to the schedule agreed to in the negotiations between Government of India and World Bank.

Board of Apprenticeship Training

3384. SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the 'Board of Apprenticeship Training' has been created and controlled by the Union Government;

(b) if so, whether Government of Maharashtra has requested to transfer this Scheme to State Government; and

(c) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) The four Boards of Apprenticeship/Practical Training